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ACTION EA-09

INFO GPM-03, SC-01, RSC-01, USIA-12, H-02, NSC-10, L-03, INR-07, P-04, CIA-04,
DOD-01, SP-02, SS-35, STR-03, NSAE-00, EUR-25, IO-21, AID-30, SAL-01,
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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8625
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC FOR POLAD
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 8254

SUBJ: LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS: BIEN HOA

REF: SAIGON 6663

1. NAMES AND BASIC BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON ALL 47 CANDIDATES INITIALLY FILING FOR THE LOWER HOUSE FROM BIEN HOA, WHERE FOUR SEATS ARE AT STAKE, WERE REPORTED REFTEL. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS IN BIEN HOA FOLLOWS.

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2. THIRTY CANDIDATES REMAIN IN THE RACE. EIGHT WITHDREW AND EIGHT WERE DISQUALIFIED FOR INSUFFICIENT DOCUMENTATION, AND ONE, BIEN HOA CVT OFFICIAL VU QUANG LAN, WAS ELIMIATED UNDER THE LEGAL PROVISION EXCLUDING THOSE WHOSE ACTIVITIES HAVE PROVEN "PROFITABLE TO COMMUNISM". LAN IS GENERALLY REGARDED BY THOSE AMERICANS

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WHO KNOW HIM AS AN INTELLIGENT AND CONSTRUCTIVE YOUNG LABOR LEADER. LAN WAS UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED BY 29-MEMBER BIEN HOA CVT COUNCIL AND PROBABLY STOOD A FAIR CHANCE OF ELECTION. LAN HAS BEEN A SEVERE CRITIC OF THE GVN AND FREQUENTLY HAS CLASHED WITH PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS; FROM 1946-49 (AGED 13-16) HE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE VIET MINH. LAN HAS HAD FREQUENT CONTACTS WITH VARIOUS EMBOFFS WHO HAVE NO
REASON TO DOUBT HIS ANTI-COMMUNISM. LAN'S
APPEAL (WHICH WAS COUNTER-SIGNED BY CVT NATIONAL CHAIRMAN TRAN QUOC BUU) WAS DISALLOWED BY THE CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL.

3. THOSE WHO WITHDREW:

VO VAN TRUYEN, AFTER WINNING SEAT IN UPPER HOUSE ON REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET LIST NUMBER 21;

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DO HUU QUONG, ONLY BIEN HOA "NATIVE" AMONG PROVINCE'S THREE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEPUTIES; REPORTEDLY BECAUSE HE ASSESSED HIS CHANCES OF WINNING AS POOR QUON WAS AN UNDISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE CA;

FOLLOWING WITHDREW FOR REASONS UNKNOWN:

CAO VAN THOI;
TRAN VAN BANG;
CAO HUU LINH;
NGUYEN TRONG XUAN;
(MISS) DUONG TAN TUOC;
NGUYEN VIET THE.

4. THOSE WHO WERE DISQUALIFIED FOR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS:

PHAM CONG LINH;
NGUYEN KIM TAY;
NGUYEN VAN BINH;
CHU NGOC QUANG;
NGUYEN NGOC DINH;

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NUYNH CONG CHUC;
NGUYEN SINH SAC;
LE THE TUNG.

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FIRST SIX OF ABOVE WERE IN MILITARY AND IT IS LIKELY THAT SOME OR ALL OF THEM WERE UNABLE TO OBTAINOFFICIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

5. NORTHERN CATHOLIC REFUGEE VOTE (THEY ARE 30 PERCENT OF POPULATION) WILL BE DECISIVE IN DETERMINING OUTCOME IN BIEN HOA. IF CATHOLICS XAN AGREE ON THREE OR FOUR CONTENDERS, THEY MAY CAPTURE AS MANY SEATS. THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE SYMPATHY OR COMM NICATION BETWEEN THE NORTHERN CATHOLIC REFUGEES AND THE BIEN HOA "NATIVES" AND ONLY ONE CANDIDATE, SOUTHERN CATHOLIC CAO VAN CUA, APPEARS LIKELY TO RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM BOTH GROUPS. CUA IS EX-ARVN CAPTAIN WHO RESIGNED AS DISTRICT CHIEF OF DUC TU DISTRICT IN JUNE, 1966. CUA HAS REPUTATION OF BEING HONEST AND FAIR.

6. THERE ARE AT LEAST TEN OTHER CATHOLICS IN THE RACE. CATHOLIC GREATER SOLIDARITY FORCES (GSF) ORGANIZATION IS KNOWN TO BE BACKING AT LEAST THREE:

NGUYEN KHAC TAN, SAIGON LAWYER. TAN LED DEFENSE OF MAJOR DANG SI, THE ARVN OFFICER WHO COMMANDED THE TROOPS WHO FIRED INTO CROWD OF DEMONSTRATING BUJDHISTS IN MAY 1963;

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MAC GIAO, AKA PHAM HUU GIAC, YOUNG JOURNALIST WHO WRITES FOR LEADING CATHOLIC DALIES, "SAY DUNG" AND "HOA BINH";

MAI QUOC THAI, ESSO EMPLOYEE AND LEADER OF BIEN HOA PETROLEUM WORKERS' UNION. HE HAS ENDORSEMENT OF 29,000 MEMBER BIEN HOA CVT.

ALTHOUGH GSF SUPPORT PROBABLY WILL ENSURE VICTORY FOR ONE OR MORE OF THE ABOVE, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT SOME RURAL CATHOLIC

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PRIESTS, NOW THAT BUDDHIST THREAT APPEARS ON THE WANE, FEEL THAT CATHOLICS SHOULD AVOID BEING TOO CLOSELY TIED WITH GSF WHICH TO DATE HAS BEEN CONSIDERED A LARGELY NORTHERN CATHOLIC REFUGEE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION.

7. OTHER NORTHERN CATHOLICS IN THE FIELD WHO MAY WIN SUPPORT FROM SOME ELEMENTS OF BIEN HOA CLERGY:

PHAM GIA THUY, ARVN MAJOR;

CAO DINH HUE, RECENTLY VERY ACTIVE IN ORGANIZING BIEN HOA LAMBRETTA DRIVERS INTO LOCAL BRANCH OF VIETNAMESE FREE TRADE UNION WHICH CLAIMS ABOUTMMTPP MEMBERS IN BIEN HOA. HUE WAS BADLY BEATEN IN TRY FOR BINH DUONG CA SEAT LAST YEAR;

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DINH LUU NHA, ARVN 1ST LT., REPORTEDLY TEACHES IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS UNDER AUSPICES OF ARVN CHAPLAINS CORPS;

NGUYEN HUU CHINH, ARVN MAJOR FROM GIA DINH, REPORTEDLY AN OFFICER IN THE MILITARY SECURITY SERVICES. MAY FACE CGWSSJ#IN CONNECTION WITH ALLEGED CORRUPTION IN SAIGON PORT;

DINH CONG NGHIEP, MEMBER OF PROVINCIAL COUNCIL;

LY VAN HIEN, CHINESE CALLIGRAPHER SAID TO BE MEMBER OF SMALL VU HONG KHANH VNQDD BRANCH IN BIEN HOA;

TRAN MAI LUAN, GIA DINH JOURNALIST.

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DOD-01 OCP-02 SS-35 SAH-03 NSAE-00 EUR-25 IO-21 AID-30 SAL-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5626

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 8254

SUBJ: UPPER HOUSE ELECTIONS: BIEN HOA

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3. AMONG THE "NATIVE" CANDIDATES WHO ARE POPULAR IS CHAIRMAN OF THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL HO VAN TAM. ALTHOUGH 62 YEARS OLD, HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE THE UNBLEMISHED REPUTATION AS WELL AS THE VIGOR OF A YOUNG MAN. OTHERS WITH SOME LOCAL REPUTATION:

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--LIEU THAT TRUONG, CENSUS GRIEVANCE CHIEF. HE REPORTEDLY HAS FARMER-WORKER-LABOR BACKING (ORGANIZATION LED BY VICTORIOUS UPPER HOUSE WINNER GENERAL TON TAN DON). SOME TERM TRUONG "ARROGANT".

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HONG KIM TIENG, FORMER BIEN HOA TAX SERVICE CHIEF, HAS REPUTATION AS HONEST BUT IS NOT WIDELY KNOWN.

TRAN MINH NHUT, 29 YEAR OLD ECONOMIST PRESENTLY WORKING IN OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER, COULD BE DARK HORSE WINNER. HE HAS GOOD EDUCATION AND HAS IMPRESSED KNOWLEDGEABLE LOCAL OBSERVERS.

PHAN THE GIAO, TEACHER, MAY HAVE TAN DAI VIET AS WELL AS FARMER-WORKER-LABOR SUPPORT.

9. OTHER "NATIVES" IN THE RACE:

NGUYEN BA HOANG, CIVIL SERVANT IN PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION;

VO [illegible] TRIUE, CHAIRMAN OF BINH TRUOC VILLAGE (URBAN BIEN HOA) WIDELY REGARDED AS DRAFT-DODGER;

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TRAN VAN YEN AKA HUE QUANG, FORMER MONK WHO ABANDONED CALLING TO MARRY;

HO VAN CUNG AKA HO CUNG, DRUGGIST AND BINH TRUC VILLAGE COUNCILMAN;

TRUONG DUC, CHINESE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER;

NGUYEN VAN HAI, PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEMBER, MAY CAMPAIGN ON "PEACE" PLATFORM;

VO VAN SO;

NGUYEN VAN TRI;

LE AN KIET, RETIRED VETERINARIAN.

10. NONE OF OUT-OF-PROVINCE ENTRIES APPEAR WELL KNOWN;

MRS. DUONG THIEU DUONG, BORN BUI KIM THI, TEACHER AT

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TAN SON NHUT AIR BASE, SISTER-IN-LAW OF COMMANDER OF LOCALLY BASED 23RD VNAF SQUADRON;

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MRS. NGUYEN THI HUOT, BORN NGOC ANH, BUSINESSWOMAN IN SAIGON;

BUI VAN HOA, GIA DINH RESIDENT, MAY CAMPAIGN ON "PEACE" PLATFORM;

NGUYEN DUY BAO, GIA DINH PROFESSOR;

TRUONG VAN NGHI, CHOLON.

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